

Yoplait Joins the no rBGH Club

By Ben Lilliston

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Kudos to General Mills, who [announced Monday](#) that its Yoplait brand would stop using milk from cows injected with the synthetic hormone, recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH).

"Yoplait joins the growing number of companies that have listened to consumers and rejected dairy from cows injected with rBGH," said David Wallinga, M.D., Director of IATP's Food and Health program in [our press release](#). "The marketplace is following the public health community, which has long been cautioning about the unnecessary use of routine hormones and antibiotics in animals used for food."

When rBGH arrived on the market as Posilac in 1994, it was one of the first genetically engineered agriculture products. Posilac was marketed as a way for dairy farmers to improve income by slightly increasing milk production. But the economic benefits never materialized for farmers. Fifteen years later, U.S. dairy farmers are experiencing the [largest price drop in 50 years](#).

And the cows didn't react too well either. A side effect (listed on the rBGH label) is the propensity for the hormone to make cows sick with udder infections, forcing farmers to increase their antibiotic use. There is now a scientific consensus that heavy [antibiotic use in farm animals increases antibiotic resistance](#), often transmitted back to humans. Health Care Without Harm has put together an excellent, [well-referenced fact sheet](#) on public health concerns with rBGH.

Consumers have consistently rejected rBGH, with almost [60 percent stating](#) that they would pay a premium price for dairy products coming from cows not treated with the hormone. This consumer sentiment has driven the rejection of rBGH by a host of food companies. [Monsanto](#), the original manufacturer of rBGH, was finally forced to [sell the product last year to Eli Lilly](#). We [blogged on Monsanto's decision](#) and the 15-year history of rBGH last year.

For Minnesota consumers, IATP has produced a new [Smart Guide to Minnesota Dairy Without rBGH](#), which lists milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, ice cream and restaurants that do not source from cows injected with rBGH. Sustainable Table and Food and Water Watch have also put together a great [rBGH-free Dairy Map](#) that covers the country.

General Mills' announcement was another nail in the coffin of rBGH. Who will be the next food company to join the no rBGH Club?